

just in bridges but in highways, in ports, in airports, in rail, is inadequate and it's outdated.

I proposed as a solution recently a national strategic transportation plan. The American Council of Civil Engineers has estimated this will take \$1.7 trillion.

We need a national plan to restore our infrastructure from sea to shining sea, where we have congestion, where we have bridges falling into our rivers and where we have inadequate infrastructure on which to conduct the business of this country or just get around our congested communities.

So we need a bigger plan, and then we need a way to finance that plan, and I look forward to working with all of the Members in trying to develop that plan and with this administration and the next administration.

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So finally, as I close with my initial thoughts, I want to say that our prayers go out to the people of Minnesota, especially the families of those affected by this tragedy. And I pledge from our side of the aisle again to work with every Member in Congress and with the folks in Minnesota to bring things back to regular order there.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Minneapolis (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank the distinguished chairman of the Transportation Committee and also thank all the members of the Minneapolis delegation and every single Member of this esteemed body. This is the greatest deliberative body in the world and in the history of the world. And the evidence of that is that not only, not only does this body thoroughly debate issues, but when tragedy strikes one, people respond in the most humanitarian way. Even though we have strong points of difference of opinion, when tragedy strikes America, we have no Republicans, we have no Democrats. We just have Members of Congress who are responsive to the people of this country.

So, Mr. Chair, I want to thank you for your bold, decisive action. I want to thank all the members of the community in Minnesota who have responded, not only the official responders but the good Samaritans as well. And let me urge every Member to support this most important measure that will restore our country.

But, again, it is the tip of the iceberg. We need a new national commitment to the infrastructure of this country.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the Republican subcommittee leader on the Highways Subcommittee in the House of Representatives, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida, Ranking

Member MICA, for yielding me this time.

I rise in strong support of this bill, offered by our distinguished chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, my good friend (Mr. OBERSTAR), along with my good friend (Mr. MICA).

Our condolences, in fact the condolences of the entire Nation, go out to the people of Minnesota who were affected by this terrible tragedy.

And I want to recognize Mr. OBERSTAR's leadership and his efforts to provide an immediate response to this incident. Less than 18 hours after the I-35W bridge collapsed into the Mississippi River, Mr. OBERSTAR introduced this bill, H.R. 3311.

This bill authorizes funding to help the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area get back on its feet. It authorizes \$250 million from the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program for the repair and reconstruction of the I-35W bridge that collapsed Wednesday night.

Yesterday, the Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters, went to Minneapolis, visited the site, and immediately made available \$5 million to pay for traffic-flow adjustments and debris removal associated with this disaster. But this bill takes the first step in providing funding to repair and rebuild this bridge.

While we will not know for several months the final cost to repair and rebuild the I-35W bridge, this bill demonstrates the House's support and certainly the strong commitment from our committee to rebuild this bridge and restore some sense of normalcy to the Minneapolis-St. Paul region.

Mr. Speaker, there was a column in The Washington Post today that repeated some of the statistics you have just heard from the gentleman from Georgia about the number of deficient bridges, but this columnist also said this: "It's unrealistic to think this disaster is going to spur the Nation to seriously address all its infrastructure problems. We'll talk about the issue for a while, then go out and buy another TV. But we can, and should, at least do a more rigorous inventory and identify the structures that pose the most peril. Yes, it's boring stuff to even think about. But just look at the alternative."

Those are very true words, Mr. Speaker, and I pledge the support of our subcommittee and to work with all the leadership on our committee to not do what this columnist has said and just forget about this or move on to something else too quickly. We owe that to the people of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, 2 days ago my daughter did have a best friend who was crossing the Mississippi River. She

crossed long before the bridge collapsed. Only 2 days ago the world witnessed the collapse of a massive bridge that crosses the Mississippi River, America's heartland.

The world is now witnessing America's heroism, our first responders, our community leaders, and all of our citizens coming together to rescue victims, to heal the injured, and to mourn those lost. As of today, we know more than 130 people have been treated for injuries, 5 individuals have lost their lives, including 2 of my constituents.

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the families of the known victims: Sherry Lou Engebretsen of Shoreview, Patrick Holmes of Mounds View, Julia Blackhawk of Savage, and Artemeeo Trinidad-Meena of Minneapolis.

Minneapolis and my home of St. Paul, we are the Twin Cities. Together our cities are united, along with all of our surrounding communities, in responding to this disaster and addressing the massive redistribution of traffic to meet the needs of commuters and businesses as a result of the bridge collapse.

My dear friend from Minneapolis, Congressman Keith Ellison, has my full support as our communities work together to heal and rebuild. The people of Minneapolis are fortunate to have Congressman ELLISON working for them, and we are all proud to stand with him, as his constituents are.

Minnesota is also blessed to have Chairman OBERSTAR leading the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in the House. Chairman OBERSTAR is leading this bill and will lead our Nation forward.

Minnesotans are facing the pain, the loss, and the immense transportation challenges resulting from this bridge collapse. But every American in every State now feels an unavoidable fear about everyday risks. This week the phrase "structurally deficient" became part of our Nation's vocabulary. This week millions of Americans use bridges that have been deemed structurally deficient or, even worse, functionally obsolete. Imagine trusting your family's safety and well-being to a bridge that is "functionally obsolete."

American families should not have to worry about this. Passage of this bill will do one small step in rebuilding and uniting a community and a State, but we must make sure that every American family feels safe.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished former Chair of the T&I Committee and the senior Republican on the T&I Committee, Transportation and Infrastructure, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I first want to congratulate the chairman, Mr. OBERSTAR, and the Minnesota delegation in expediting this process